

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, Austin strives to be one of the healthiest and most sustainable communities in the nation; and

WHEREAS, a thriving local food system can have broad positive impacts on Austin and Central Texas communities in the areas of public health, the economy, and the environment; and

WHEREAS, a 2009 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) study found that areas with limited access to affordable nutritious food due to a lack of nearby grocery stores and lack of transportation, also known as food deserts, may be connected to public health concerns such as obesity and diet-related diseases, especially in low-income communities; and

WHEREAS, the USDA Food Desert Locator indicates there are currently more than twenty census tracts that could be considered food deserts in Austin; and

WHEREAS, the 2011 Central Texas Foodshed Assessment (CTFA report) stated the Capital Area Food Bank provides food to over 200,000 people in Central Texas annually; and

WHEREAS, the CTFA report indicated there are more than 75 registered Central Texas farms smaller than 250 acres growing fruits and vegetables for sale; and

WHEREAS, the CTFA report also found that the five-county region includes some 29 farmer's markets and 28 community gardens, with the majority of community gardens being located within Austin's city limits; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has provided financial and in-kind support to encourage the development of local farmer's markets for ten years; and

WHEREAS, local economic impacts may be significant, as a 2008 Sustainable Seattle study found money spent at community-based restaurants and grocers more than doubles the dollars circulated among local businesses, with the largest impact coming from money spent at farmer's markets; and

WHEREAS, various organizations in Austin are using food production as a type of community and workforce development to engage at-risk populations in low-income and minority communities; and

WHEREAS, the 2009 Zero Waste Master Plan identified over half of the materials headed to landfills as compostable and prioritizes reuse of the organic waste as compost, which can be incorporated into our local food system; and

WHEREAS, the Sustainable Food Policy Board has recommended an economic impact study on the local food system similar to the previous economic impact studies on the film, music, cultural arts, and digital media/gaming software industries; and

WHEREAS, a more holistic understanding of the economic, environmental, health, and community impacts of urban agriculture and local food production would inform future policy and budgetary decisions as well as establish a baseline for future research; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to conduct an economic impact analysis of urban agriculture and the local food system (covering all stages: food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste) in the City of Austin. The study shall evaluate at a minimum:

- the impact on local economic activity, specifically addressing the local multiplier effect of keeping more dollars circulating in the local economy,
- the effect of the overall local food system on local business development and job creation,
- the sustainable aspects of a diverse local food system that embraces innovative low-resource intensive urban agriculture techniques, and
- best practices and new initiatives from other cities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The final report back to Council should identify key constraints in further developing a local system and include policy recommendations and implementation strategies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager shall include estimated costs for the economic impact analysis report in the FY2013 budget, and provide a status update and the timeline for completion of the report to Council by November 1, 2012.

ADOPTED: _____, 2012 **ATTEST:** _____

Shirley A. Gentry
City Clerk

DRAFT